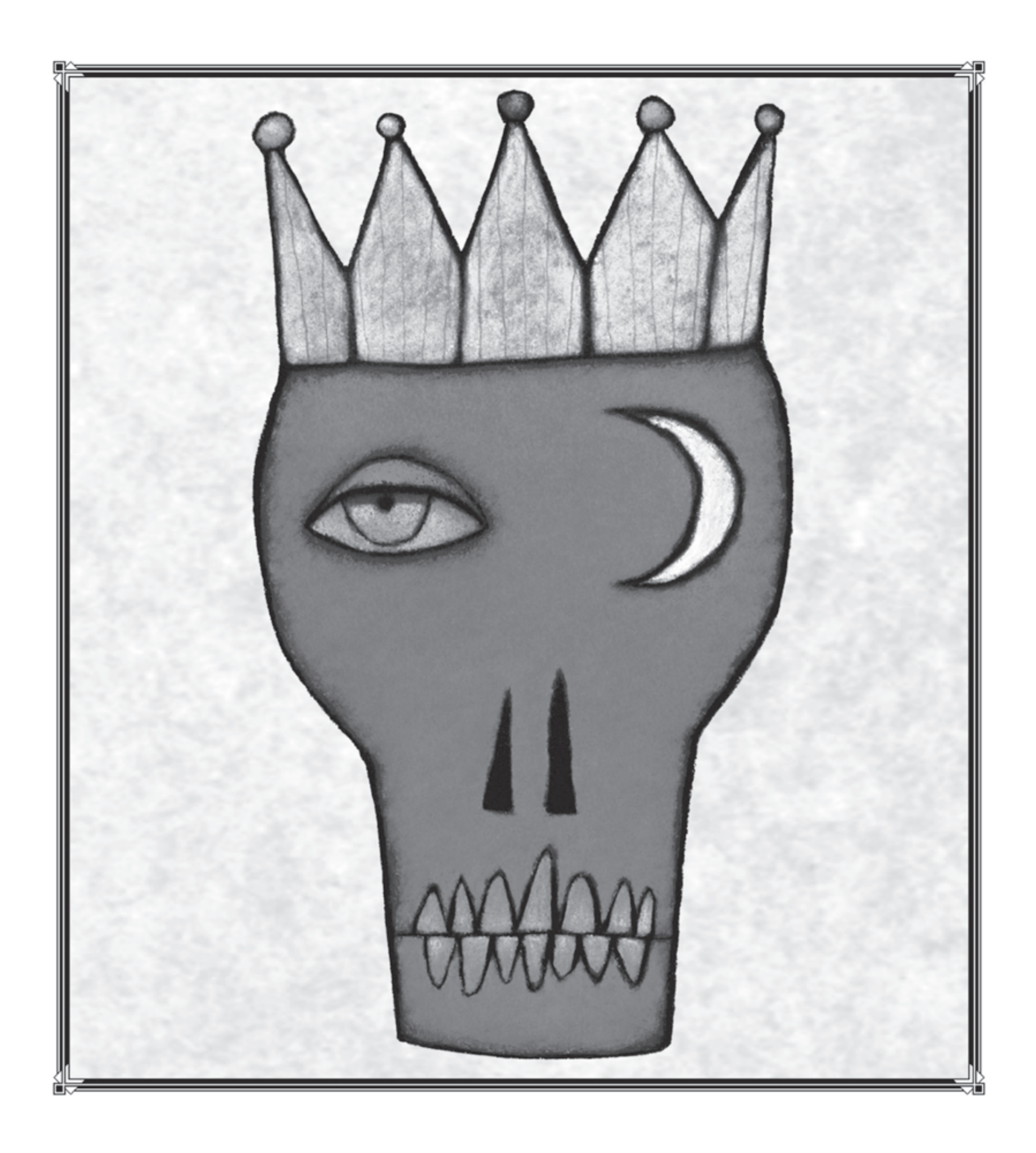
SHAKESPEARE
MADE EASY
Macbeth

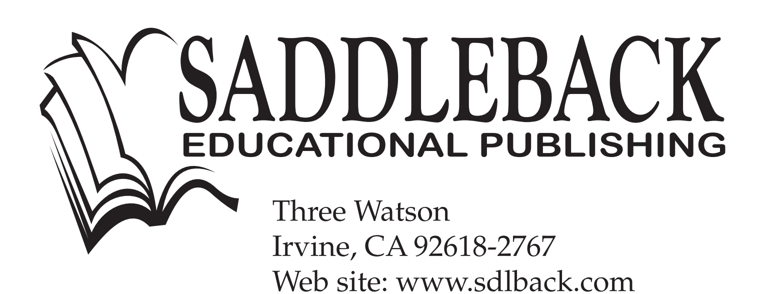


SADDLEBACK
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SHAKESPEARE
MADE EASY
Macbeth



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Contents



To the Teacher

As any teacher or student who has read Shakespeare knows, his plays are not easy. They are thought-provoking and complex texts that abound with romance, deceit, tragedy, comedy, revenge, and humanity shown at its very worst as well as its very best. In short, to read Shakespeare is to explore the depths and heights of humanity.

The *Shakespeare Made Easy* Activity Guides are designed by teachers for teachers to help students navigate this journey. Each guide is broken into six sections of four activities and one review. At the end of each guide is a final test, a variety of culminating activities, and an answer key. The activities are meant to aid textual comprehension, provide creative opportunities for the reader to make personal connections with the text, and help busy teachers gain quick access to classroom-tested and age-appropriate activities that make the teaching of Shakespeare an easier task.

Each regular activity, as well as each culminating activity, can be modified to be an individual or a group task, and the reviews and test can be used as quick comprehension checks or formally scored assessments. The guides may be used in conjunction with the Barron's *Shakespeare Made Easy* texts or alone. Ultimately, the *Shakespeare Made Easy* Activity Guides are intended to assist teachers and students in gaining an increased understanding of and appreciation for the reading of Shakespeare.



Introduction to the Play

Background to *Macbeth*

Macbeth is based on the career of Scottish King Macbeth. The actual Macbeth lived from 1005 to 1057 and reigned from approximately 1039 to 1054. At that time in Scotland, it was not a horrific crime to take the throne away from a weak, royal relative. In fact, in eleventh century Scotland, the overthrow of a king was a common occurrence. As far as historians can tell, the actual Macbeth took the throne away from his ineffective cousin, King Duncan, in approximately 1039. As a grandson of King Malcolm II, Macbeth did have a claim to the throne of Scotland. King Macbeth gained the throne by a civil war rather than murder, and King Duncan died in battle. There is no historical evidence that Banquo existed. Also, the historical King Duncan was close in age to Macbeth, but Shakespeare altered the account to make King Duncan much older. The historical Macbeth ruled Scotland with wisdom and grace for fifteen peaceful years. His rule came to an end when the exiled Prince Malcolm invaded Scotland with English forces.

The story of Macbeth as told by the historian Holinshed became based on legend as much as history. Holinshed portrays Macbeth plotting the murder of King Duncan with both his wife and Banquo after hearing a prophecy from the Three Witches. After the murder of King Duncan, King Macbeth rules well for about ten years. However, the witch's prophecy that Banquo will be the father of many kings begins to bother Macbeth. He orders the murder of Banquo and his son Fleance. However, Fleance escapes. Other nobles rise up against Macbeth and, led by Macduff, defeat Macbeth at Birnam Wood, carrying branches to camouflage their attack.

Shakespeare changed the plot about Banquo's responsibility for King Duncan's murder. Many feel that this was changed in order to keep pure the story of Banquo's being a father of the Stuart kings and the ancestor of James I. Most Shakespearean scholars think that the specific details of witchcraft came from the published work of King James I. Of course, Shakespeare took the time of ten to fifteen years and condenses it into a few days and nights.
Even though *Macbeth* is one of Shakespeare's shortest plays, it is considered by most experts to be one of Shakespeare's most powerful portrayals of how lust for power can corrupt a person's soul.

It is important to remember that *Macbeth* is not primarily a history play but is considered to be one of Shakespeare's final tragedies. One helpful way to view this play is through the template of a tragedy. In Shakespeare's era, a tragedy always focused on the tragic protagonist: a person of high stature whose personal flaw causes him to choose wrongly. While the reader disagrees with Macbeth's actions, Macbeth is nevertheless a well-spoken and brave nobleman. Macbeth's wrong choice upsets the "Great Chain of Being," and the tragic protagonist pays the extreme penalty for this disorder. The Great Chain of Being was

part of the Elizabethan worldview. It was a hierarchy, with God at the top of the chain and, in descending order, angels, kings, noblemen, commoners, and, finally, animals. If a person's ambition drove him or her to seek to escape from his or her place on the chain, this broke the ordained order and invited chaos in the world and in the personal life of the person who dared to act in such a way.

Also important to a tragedy is the progression of the tragic process: Dilemma, Wrong Choice, Suffering, Perception, Death, and Restoration to Order. Macbeth fits the tragic process perfectly. His dilemma was whether or not to murder King Duncan. With his wife's strong prompting and prophesies from the Three Witches aiding his motive, he makes the wrong choice. Immediately after King Duncan's murder, Macbeth experiences extreme suffering. He cannot sleep, he has no joy in life, his wife dies, and almost all his friends reject him. He is isolated in every way. Even the cosmos reflects the disorder with evil omens and earthquakes. As Macbeth faces the final battle, he realizes that his ambition did not bring peace, and he sees that he must die to pay the penalty for the chaos he has caused. The crowning of Malcolm represents the Restoration to Order for Scotland.

The reader has to wonder what influence the Three Witches and Lady Macbeth had on Macbeth's choices. While their influence was intense, Shakespeare seems to show that Macbeth is ultimately responsible for his wrong choice. The terrible story of Macbeth's life and death continues to hold fascination, surprise, and awe for anyone who studies the play thoughtfully.

Synopsis of *Macbeth*

Act one, Scene 1

On a heath in Scotland, the Three Witches plan to meet Macbeth at the end of one of his battles.

Act one, Scene 2

King Duncan, his sons Malcolm and Donalbain, and other noblemen listen to a wounded captain give the news of the battle against the traitor Macdonwald. The fighting was intense, but Macbeth was a valiant soldier and won the battle. No sooner was that battle over than the King of Norway and his troops attacked Macbeth and Banquo and their army. Nobleman Ross arrives and reports that the Norwegians were assisted by the thane of Cawdor. However, even with all these strong forces, Macbeth was the winner. Cawdor's betrayal will be rewarded with death, and his title will be given to the victorious Macbeth.

Act one, Scene 3

On a heath in the Scottish countryside, the Three Witches prepare for Macbeth's arrival. Macbeth and Banquo are greeted by the witches, who proclaim that Macbeth is hailed as thane of Glamis, thane of Cawdor, and king hereafter. They also proclaim that Banquo will be a father of kings, but not a king himself. Then the witches disappear. Soon, Angus and

Ross greet Macbeth as thane of Cawdor as a reward for his military success. Macbeth wonders whether the witches' prophesy is good or bad and whether he really has a chance to be King of Scotland.

Act one, Scene 4

The king explains that he now realizes that a man's face does not show his true intentions, because he had trusted the thane of Cawdor, who has been executed because of his betrayal. The king honors Macbeth and Banquo for their success in battle. King Duncan proclaims that Malcolm, his eldest son, will be his successor. The king tells Macbeth that he plans to spend that night at Macbeth's castle. Macbeth ponders the fact that Malcolm now stands in his way to the throne of Scotland.

Act one, Scene 5

Reading a note from Macbeth about the witches' prophecies, Lady Macbeth vows to do whatever it takes to make Macbeth the next King of Scotland. A messenger informs Lady Macbeth that King Duncan will be sleeping that night in the castle. Lady Macbeth prays to the forces of evil to assist her with the murder of Duncan. Macbeth meets his wife, and she implies to him that Duncan will not leave their castle alive.

Act one, Scene 6

With great warmth and generosity, Lady Macbeth welcomes King Duncan, his sons, Banquo, and other nobles to Macbeth's castle.

Act one, Scene 7

Troubled by his conscience, Macbeth thinks about the negative consequences of murdering King Duncan. Worried that Macbeth will not carry on with the murder, Lady Macbeth shames Macbeth by calling him a coward. She convinces Macbeth to continue their plans to murder the king.

Act two, Scene 1

It is after midnight, and Banquo cannot sleep. He is bothered by the prophecies of the Three Witches. Macbeth joins Banquo and claims that he doesn't even think of the witches. Banquo goes to bed, and Macbeth is alone. Macbeth has a hallucination of a dagger in the air, covered with blood, that points him to King Duncan's bedroom. A bell rings, which is the sign from Lady Macbeth that the coast is clear and that Macbeth should go to King Duncan's room to kill him.

Act two, Scene 2

Lady Macbeth's job was to drug the guards with wine, and she has drunk some wine as well. Macbeth emerges from the king's chamber, covered in blood, with dagger in hands, and already filled with guilt. He has heard a voice say that because Macbeth has murdered sleep, he will sleep no more. Lady Macbeth tells him that a little water will clean away the evidence. She takes the dagger and puts it by the guards, smearing them with blood so it looks as though they committed the murder. There is a knocking at the gate to the castle. Remorsefully,

Macbeth wishes that the knocking could wake King Duncan.

Act two, Scene 3

Lord Macduff and Lord Lennox are knocking at the gate. A drunken porter hears the knocking and pretends he is the porter at the gate of hell. He opens the gate and converses wittily with Macduff and Lennox about alcohol. Macbeth enters and leads the nobles to Duncan's chamber. Lennox tells Macbeth about strong storms, earthquakes, and other omens of evil that occurred in the night. Macduff discovers that the king is dead and rings the alarm bell. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth pretend that they are appalled, and the entire castle is awakened with the horrible news. Macbeth uses the confusion as an opportunity to kill the king's guards, so that they cannot contradict the evidence. Malcolm and Donalbain assume they are also targets and flee from Macbeth's castle.

Act two, Scene 4

An old man near Macbeth's castle tells Ross about the evil omens that occurred during the night. Macduff welcomes Ross and tells of Prince Malcolm and Donalbain's quick departure from the castle. He wonders if their departure is a sign that they may have murdered their own father.

Act three, Scene 1

Because everyone thinks the princes have probably killed King Duncan, Macbeth has been named King of Scotland. Banquo thinks about the Three Witches and questions whether or not Macbeth has murdered King Duncan. Banquo leaves Macbeth's castle, and Macbeth hires two assassins to follow Banquo and kill him and his son Fleance. That way, no heir of Banquo can become king.

Act three, Scene 3

On a road outside of Macbeth's castle, the killers attack Banquo and his son. They are successful in their murder of Banquo, but Fleance escapes unharmed.

Act three, Scene 4

Back at Macbeth's castle, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth put on a lavish banquet for their guests. One of the killers quietly informs Macbeth that they have killed Banquo but that Fleance still lives. Macbeth is upset by the news, but he grows even more upset when he sees the ghost of Banquo at the table. Macbeth talks to the ghost, which makes him appear mad to the guests. Lady Macbeth then asks the guests to leave. After the botched banquet, Macbeth tells Lady Macbeth that he does not trust Macduff since he did not attend the banquet. He will go to the witches to try to learn more. Lady Macbeth expresses her concern that Macbeth does not get sleep anymore.

Act three, Scene 5

On the heath, the head witch, Hecate, tells the Three Witches they should not have given

information to Macbeth. She tells them to be ready to meet Macbeth tomorrow.

Act three, Scene 6

At Macbeth's castle, Lennox discusses the murders with another lord. They hint that they think King Macbeth is at the core of all the deaths. They comment that Macduff has gone to England, perhaps to meet up with Prince Malcolm and to ask King Edward the Confessor for help.

Act four, Scene 1

In a cavern, the Three Witches make an evil brew in a cauldron. Macbeth enters and asks the witches for advice. They bring up three spirits. The first spirit warns him to be wary of Macduff. The second tells Macbeth that "none of woman born" can harm him. The third tells him that he will be safe unless Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane Hill. Macbeth is relieved, since the last two prophecies seem to ensure that he will be victorious. Then Macbeth asks if Banquo's sons will be kings. The witches produce a vision of eight kings, followed by Banquo's ghost, who is smiling and indicating that the kings are all his heirs. The witches go away. Lennox arrives and informs Macbeth of Macduff's desertion. For punishment, Macbeth declares he will kill all of Macduff's family and plunder his home and possessions.

Act four, Scene 2

Ross goes to Macduff's castle to tell Lady Macduff that her husband is in England. Lady Macduff is afraid and wonders if her children will be safe. She tells her son that his father is dead, but the boy knows that she is not telling the truth. Lady Macduff receives a warning of danger, but it is too late. Macbeth's men kill Lady Macduff and her son.

Act four, Scene 3

In England, Prince Malcolm and Macduff discuss the problems in Scotland. To test Macduff's loyalty, Malcolm tries to convince Macduff that he does not feel qualified to lead Scotland. Macduff mourns for Scotland, and Malcolm tells him of his determination to take the crown. Ross arrives and tells them that Macduff's family has been killed. Macduff and Malcolm prepare an army to return to Scotland and take revenge on Macbeth.

Act five, Scene 1

In Macbeth's castle, Lady Macbeth's doctor and her lady-in-waiting comment about Lady Macbeth's mental stability. They see Lady Macbeth enter the room walking and talking in her sleep. She makes movements as though she is washing her hands and becomes upset because she cannot make them clean of blood. She returns to her bedroom, and the doctor tells the lady-in-waiting that he cannot help Lady Macbeth recover her sanity.

Act five, Scene 2

On a field near Dunsinane, Mentieth, Angus, and Caithness, rebels against Macbeth, discuss with Lennox the rumors that Macbeth is

insane. They are happy that Malcolm, Macduff, and Siward are planning to assemble at Birnam Wood to fight against Macbeth.

Act five, Scene 3

Macbeth puts his confidence in the prophecies of the witches when he hears of the advance of Malcolm's army. He thinks that since Birnam Wood cannot come to Dunsinane and since Malcolm is born of a woman, he is safe. He is upset that the doctor cannot heal Lady Macbeth. Macbeth dresses for battle.

Act five, Scene 4

Each of Malcolm's soldiers are ordered to cut a branch from a tree in Birnam Wood in order to camouflage themselves as they advance on Macbeth's castle at Dunsinane, where Macbeth has set up his defense.

Act five, Scene 5

Macbeth boasts that there is no evil that makes him pause. Then Seyton, Macbeth's servant, tells Macbeth that Lady Macbeth is dead. This news causes Macbeth to comment that life is empty, "a brief candle" and "a walking shadow." A messenger arrives telling news of "a moving grove" of trees advancing on the castle at Dunsinane. Macbeth realizes that the spirit's prophecy is coming true but says he is prepared to die.

Act five, Scene 6

Macduff, Siward, and Malcolm, with their army, prepare to attack Macbeth's castle at Dunsinane.

Act five, Scene 7

As Malcolm's army advances, Macbeth fights hand-to-hand combat. Macbeth kills Siward's son in battle. Siward and Macduff seek out Macbeth and engage him in a fight. Macbeth announces that he is invincible because he cannot be killed by anyone born of a woman. Macduff states that he was removed from his mother's womb by a surgeon, and therefore was not "born of woman." Macbeth realizes that the witches have doomed him with their prophecies and spirits. He does not surrender or commit suicide but keeps fighting. Macduff kills Macbeth and brings Macbeth's head to Malcolm, proclaiming Malcolm King of Scotland. Malcolm announces that all his supporters will be made earls in thanks for their assistance in the defeat of Macbeth.

Character List for *Macbeth*

Duncan: King of Scotland

Malcolm: Elder son of King Duncan

Donalbain: Younger son of King Duncan

Macbeth: Thane of Glamis, thane of Cawdor, and King of Scotland

Lady Macbeth: Wife to Macbeth who becomes Queen of Scotland

Banquo: A Scottish lord and friend to Macbeth who becomes Macbeth's victim

Fleance: Banquo's son

Macduff: Thane of Fife and a leader of the rebellion against Macbeth

Lady Macduff: Wife of Macduff who is killed by Macbeth's mercenaries

Macduff's Son

Lennox, Ross, Angus, Mentieth, and Caithness: Scottish lords who grow to mistrust Macbeth's leadership and battle against him at Dunsinane

Three Witches: Also known as the Weird Sisters; prophesize Macbeth's fate

Hecate: Queen of the witches

Captain: A leader of King Duncan's army

Porter: A servant who opens Macbeth's gate

Three Murderers: Three men with shady pasts who agree to murder Banquo and Fleance for a bounty

Doctor: Medical attendant to Lady Macbeth

Gentlewoman: A woman who acts as nurse to Lady Macbeth

Seyton: Macbeth's personal attendant and officer in his army

Siward: Earl of Northumberland, an English Lord who joins Macduff and Malcolm against Macbeth

Siward's Son

Other Minor Characters: Attendants, messengers, servants, murderers, soldiers, apparitions

Shakespeare and Stage Directions

The plays of Shakespeare are so well written that they seem to leap off the page and come to life. However, the plays themselves have very few stage directions. Perhaps this is because Shakespeare's plays were performed in large amphitheaters that were very simple.

This was a time before electric lights, so the plays needed to take place during the day to utilize the natural light. The average time for a performance was between noon and two in the afternoon. Theater historians report that there were typically no intermissions; plays ran from beginning to end without a break and took about two hours.

The set might be painted canvas to illustrate whether the play was occurring in a forest or a town, for example. Sometimes the background was accompanied by a sign that indicated the place as well. Props were few and large: a table, a chariot, gallows, a bed, or a throne.

However, the audience attending Shakespeare's plays expected a spectacle for the price of admission. Therefore, there were many devices to produce a gasp from the audience. For example, a device in the loft of the theater could raise and lower actors so that they could play gods, ghosts, or other unusual characters. Additionally, a trapdoor in the stage offered a chance for a quick appearance or disappearance. The actors could suggest a beheading or hanging with various illusions on the stage. Sound effects suggesting thunder, horses, or war were common. Music was important, and drums and horns were often played.

Most important to the sense of spectacle were the costumes worn by the actors. These were elaborate, colorful, and very expensive. Therefore, they often purchased these outfits

from servants who had inherited the clothes from their masters or from hangmen, who received the clothes of their victims as payment for their services.

Though Shakespeare's stage directions are sparse, definition of a few key terms will be helpful for the reader. The following is a brief glossary of stage directions commonly found in Shakespeare's plays.

Selected Glossary of Stage Directions in Shakespeare's Plays

Above: an indication that the actor speaking from above is on a higher balcony or other scaffold that is higher than the other actors

Alarum: a stage signal, which calls the soldiers to battle; usually trumpets, drums, and shouts

Aside: words spoken by the actor so the audience overhears but the other actors on the stage do not. An aside may also be spoken to one other actor so that the others on stage do not overhear.

Calls within: a voice offstage that calls to a character on the stage

Curtains: Curtains were fabrics draped around a bed that could be opened or closed for privacy.

Draw: Actors pull their swords from their sheathes.

Enter: a direction for a character to enter the stage. This can be from the audience's right (stage right) or the audience's left (stage left).

Enter Chorus: a direction for an actor to come to the center of the stage and offer some introductory comments, usually in blank verse or rhyming couplets. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the Chorus delivers a sonnet, a form of poetry associated with love.

Exeunt: All characters leave the stage, or those characters named leave the stage.

Exit: One character leaves the stage.

Flourish: A group of trumpets or other horn instruments play a brief melody.

Have at: Characters begin to fight, usually with swords.

Pageant: a show or spectacle of actors in unusual costumes, usually without words

Prologue: an introduction spoken by the Chorus that gives an overview to the audience and invites them into the play or scene

Retires: A character slips away.

Sennet: a series of notes sounded on brass instruments to announce the approach or departure of a procession

Singing: a signal for the actor to sing the following lines as a tune

Within: voices or sounds occurring offstage but heard by the audience



Introduction to Shakespeare

A Brief Biography of William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was born in April 1564 to John and Mary Shakespeare in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. His birthday is celebrated on April 23. This is memorable because April 23 is also the day Shakespeare died in 1616.

Shakespeare was the eldest of nine children in his family, six of whom survived to adulthood.

William Shakespeare's father worked with leather and became a successful merchant early in his career. He held some relatively important government offices. However, when William was in his early teens, his father's financial position began to slide due to growing debt. After many years, John Shakespeare's fortunes and respect were restored, but records indicate that the years of debt and lawsuits were very stressful.

Historians assume that young Will went to school and took a rigorous course of study including Latin, history, and biblical study. In 1582, at the age of eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway, who was three months pregnant. Studies of Elizabethan family life indicate that Anne's situation was not unusual since it was accepted that the engagement period was as legally binding as the marriage. The couple had a daughter, Susanna, followed by twins, Hamnet and Judith. Not much is known about Shakespeare during the next seven years, but his name is listed as an actor in London by 1592. This was a difficult time for the theater because measures to prevent the spread of the plague regularly closed the theaters.

Between 1594 and 1595, Shakespeare joined the Chamberlain's Men as a playwright and an actor. The acting company featured actor Richard Burbage, and they were a favorite of Queen Elizabeth I. During this time, Shakespeare was writing such plays as *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* Even though Shakespeare was enjoying great success by the time he was 32, it was dampened by the death of his son, Hamnet, in 1596. Soon after, Shakespeare refocused on his home in Stratford where he bought an estate called New Place, with gardens, orchards, and barns in addition to the main home. He still maintained a home in London near the theater.

In 1599, Shakespeare wrote *Henry V*, *Julius Caesar*, and *As You Like It.* The Globe Playhouse was up and running, with Shakespeare a 10 percent owner. This means that he was able to earn 10 percent of any show's profits. This business position helped him solidify his wealth.

In 1603, Shakespeare's reputation earned his acting troop the sponsorship of James I, who requested one play performance per month. Their name changed to the King's Men. By this time, Shakespeare had written and performed in almost all of his comedies and histories. He was proclaimed the finest playwright in London.

But Shakespeare still had what is considered his finest writing to do. He began his writing of tragedies beginning with *Hamlet* in 1600. In the following five years, Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *King Lear*. Why Shakespeare turned to these darker, more serious themes is widely debated by scholars. But all agree that these plays established Shakespeare's premier place in English literature.

Toward the end of 1609 through 1610, Shakespeare began to write his problem romances. These works, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest*, are rich with mature themes of forgiveness, grace, and redemption.

After 1611, at the age of 47, Shakespeare moved back to Stratford exclusively, settling into life at New Place and enjoying a renewed relationship with his daughters, especially Susanna. He prepared a will, which has become famous for the request to leave his wife their "second best bed." Many have debated whether this is a sentimental or cynical bequest. In the same year that his daughter Judith married, 1616, Shakespeare died at the age of 52. However, it was not until 1623 that all his plays were collected into one manuscript, now referred to as the *First Folio*. The fellow King's Men players who compiled the manuscript, Heming and Condell, entitled it *Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies*.

Shakespeare's England

The age of Shakespeare was a glorious time for England. William Shakespeare's life in England was defined by the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603). During her leadership, England became an important naval and economic force in Europe and beyond.

England's rise to power came when its navy defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588, when Shakespeare was about 24 years old. Queen Elizabeth was skillful in navigating through the conflicts of religion. She maintained religious independence from Rome as the Church of England became firmly rooted during her reign. Additionally, she financed the establishment of colonies in America to grow the British Empire and expand its economic opportunities. At the end of her reign, England was the leader in trade, naval power, and culture.

Because of its role as the main economic, political, and cultural center of England, London became the hub of England's prosperity and fame. If anyone wanted to become famous as a poet or dramatic writer during Shakespeare's time, he would need to be in London. In fact, London was full of great writers besides Shakespeare, such as Marlowe, Sidney, and Jonson. Yet, even as London was full of parties, trade, and amusement, it was also full of poverty, crime, and disease. Crime was a large problem, and the main jail in London was called the Clink. Disease and poor sanitation were common. In fact, twice in Shakespeare's lifetime, London endured an outbreak of the plague, which killed thousands upon thousands of people.

Before Queen Elizabeth took the throne, London was a modestly sized city of about 60,000 people. By the time James I took the throne at her death, more than 200,000 people

lived in London and its suburbs. People were attracted to London because it gave many opportunities for work and financial improvement. It was also a vibrant social scene for the upper class. In fact, one honor of being a noble was the opportunity to house Queen Elizabeth and her entire party if she was in your neighborhood. If she were a guest, it was expected that her noble hosts would cover all the expenses of housing her group. She made many "progresses" through England and London, establishing her relationships with the nobility. However, several nobles asked to be released from this honor because the expense of supporting her visit had often caused them bankruptcy.

Perhaps it was better to be a flourishing member of the English merchant middle class. Their numbers and influence were rising in England at the time of Shakespeare. This was a new and an exciting development in Western European history. One major factor in the rise of the middle class was the need for wool for clothing. The expansion of the wool trade led to the formation of entire cities throughout England and sparked progress in many other areas of commerce and trade.

With the rise of the middle class came a concern for more comfortable housing. Rather than serving simply as shelter or defense against attack, housing developed architecturally and functionally. One major improvement was the use of windows to let in light. Also, houses were built with lofts and special places for eating and sleeping, rather than having one multifunctional room. However, doors between rooms were still very rare, so that privacy in Shakespeare's time did not really exist.

Meals in Shakespeare's England were an important part of the day. Breakfast was served before dawn and was usually bread and a beverage. Therefore, everyone was really hungry for the midday meal, which could last up to three hours. If meat was available in the home, it was usually served at this time. A smaller supper was eaten at 6:00 or 7:00 P.M., with the more wealthy people able to eat earlier and the working class eating later. Cooking was dangerous and difficult since all meals were cooked over an open fire. Even bread was not baked in an oven but was cooked in special pans placed over the fire. A pot was almost always cooking on the fire, and the cook would put in whatever was available for supper. This is most likely where the term "potluck" came from.

Furniture was usually made of carved wood, as woodcarving was a developing craft in Shakespeare's day. One important part of an Elizabethan home was the table, or "board." One side was finished to a nice sheen, while the other side was rough. Meals were served on the rough side of the board, and then it was flipped for a more elegant look in the room. The table is where we get the terms "room and board" and having "the tables turned." Another important part of a middle or an upper-class home was the bed. Rather than being made of prickly straw, mattresses were now stuffed with softer feathers. Surrounded by artistically carved four posts, these beds were considered so valuable that they were often a specifically named item in a will.

Clothing in Shakespeare's time was very expensive. Of course, servants and other lower-class people wore simple garb, often a basic blue. But if a person wanted to display his wealth, his clothing was elaborate and colorful, sewn with rich velvet, lace, and gold braid. An average worker might earn seven or eight English pounds in a year, and a very nice outfit for a nobleman might cost as much as 50 or 60 pounds. In other words, if seven or eight healthy workers pooled their money for the entire year, spending nothing else, they could buy only one respectable nobleman's outfit.

Entertainment was an important part of life in Shakespeare's England. Popular sports were bear-baiting, cockfighting, and an early form of bowling. Bear-baiting, in which a dog was set loose to fight with up to three chained bears in the center of an amphitheater, and cockfighting, in which roosters pecked each other to death, were popular then but would be absolutely unacceptable entertainment today. Bowling, however, has maintained its popularity in our current culture.

In London, a main source of entertainment was the theater. Some theaters were very large and could hold more than two thousand people. Even poor people could attend the theater since entrance cost only one penny (equivalent to 60 cents today), and they could stand around the stage. For a bit more money, a person could sit in an actual seat during the performance. However, some thought that going to the theater could be dangerous to your body or your soul. The theaters were closed twice during the plagues to reduce the spread of the disease. The Puritans disapproved of the theater as an unwholesome leisure time activity. And the Puritans also disliked the theater because the theaters were located in an area of London surrounded by brothels and bars. Nevertheless, the theater became respectable enough by 1603 to be supported by James I—and he was the monarch who directed the King James Version of the Bible to be translated.

Student Name ______________________________ Date ____________



ACTIVITY 1

War Correspondence

Act one, Scene 2

Background By the end of Act one, Scene 2, Shakespeare gives us enough information about the war in which Scotland is engaged to understand who has won and who should be considered heroic.

Directions Imagine that you are a reporter for the leading Scottish newspaper. Write a brief account (¾ of a page to 1 page) of how the war is going for Scotland. Like any good reporter, make sure to explain who is fighting, who has won, and how they won. Also, make sure to mention settlements, heroes, and so forth. Use another sheet of paper, if necessary.

Student Name ______________________________ Date ______________



ACTIVITY 2

The Three Witches

Act one, Scenes 1 and 3

Background Though the reader gets a sense of how the witches talk and certainly of their prophetic powers, Shakespeare leaves their physical appearance mostly to the reader's imagination (except for telling us that they have hairy chins—see Act one, Scene 3, lines 45–47).

Directions Imagine that you are directing this play and are making very detailed notes concerning how the witches look and act. Are they in traditional witches' garb (black pointy hat, flowing gown) or in a different type of dress? You decide, but be specific. Differentiate the three based on details from the text or your own imagination. It may help to reread the lines they speak in Scenes 1 and 3. Then, write a detailed description of how they would be dressed in your version; the type of lighting you would use in their scenes; and how they would stand, talk, and so forth. Suggested length: 1–2 pages. You will need additional sheets of paper for this activity.

Student Name ______________________________ Date ____________



ACTIVITY 3

Portrait of Macbeth

Act one, Scenes 2 and 3

Background In all his plays, Shakespeare launches right into plot and character development, wasting no words. *Macbeth* is no exception.

Directions Based on what you have read of Macbeth so far, answer the following questions to get a clearer picture of the man for whom the play is named. Use another sheet of paper, if necessary.

1. At the end of Act one, Scenes 2 and 3, what titles does Macbeth hold?

2. What kind of a soldier is Macbeth (see Act one, Scene 2)?

3. How does Macbeth initially view the witches and what they have to say (see Act one, Scene 3, lines 70–78)? Does he seem at all frightened by them?

4. Does Macbeth seem interested in being king, even though his friend currently holds that title (see Act one, Scene 3, lines 128–142)?

5. If given the chance, would *you* want to know what is going to happen in your future, even if what you were told was not the whole story but only part of it? Why or why not?

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ACTIVITY 4

What the Chambermaid Overheard Act one, Scene 5

Background In Act one, Scene 5, Lady Macbeth reads aloud a letter from her husband that relates his encounter with the witches.

Directions Imagine that you are a chambermaid who has accidentally overheard Lady Macbeth reading her husband's letter and her comments about the contents of the letter immediately after. Compose a short speech in which you tell another servant what you overheard. Also tell what you may now fear from Macbeth and Lady Macbeth based on this information. Use another sheet of paper, if necessary.

Student Name ______________________________ Date ____________



ACTIVITY 5

Review

Directions Answer the following. Write the letter of the correct answer in the space provided.

___ 1. This play takes place in what country?

a. Scotland
b. Norway
c. England
d. Denmark

___ 2. With whom are Duncan and his army fighting?

a. Norway
b. England
c. Scottish rebels
d. both a and c

___ 3. Macbeth gains the title of _________ of Cawdor

a. chancellor
b. dignitary
c. thane
d. king

___ 4. Another name for the Three Witches is the _________ Sisters.

a. Black
b. Strange
c. Weird
d. Sorcerer

___ 5. Macbeth hears the witches' prophecies while he is with _________.

a. Duncan
b. Malcolm
c. Macduff
d. Banquo

___ 6. The Three Witches tell Macbeth that he is to become

a. king of Scotland.
b. father to the king of Scotland.
c. a murderer.
d. a prince.

___ 7. Banquo compares the new titles and honors heaped upon Macbeth to new _________.

a. babies
b. clothes
c. days
d. ideas

___ 8. The King of Norway was forced to pay _________ thousand pounds.

a. ten
b. fifteen
c. twenty
d. fifty

___ 9. The 1st Witch put a spell on a sailor's wife because the wife

a. called the witch a bad name.
b. wouldn't give the witch chestnuts.
c. made fun of the witch's clothes.
d. asked the witch to put a spell on her husband.

___ 10. How many of the witches' prophecies have come true so far?

a. one
b. two
c. three
d. none

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ACTIVITY 6

Weighing the Deed

Act one, Scene 7

Background In his speech in lines 1–28 and 31–35 of Act one, Scene 7, Macbeth carefully thinks through the pros and cons of murdering Duncan, the current king, so that he can fulfill the witches' prophecy and take the title for himself.

Directions Reread the lines mentioned above and list the pros and cons of committing the murder as Macbeth sees it. For each pro and con, list the specific line in which it is mentioned.

Pros	Cons

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ACTIVITY 7

Evil Portent

Act one, Scenes 3–7

Background Shakespeare was a master at the art of foreshadowing events to come through the lines he wrote; he does this skillfully throughout Act one.

Directions Reread the following lines, and in your own words, list the dangers that are foreshadowed as you understand them.

Lines	Dangers to Come
1. Banquo, Scene 3, lines 120–127	
2. Macbeth, Scene 3, lines 128–142	
3. Duncan, Scene 4, lines 11–14	
4. Macbeth, Scene 4, lines 50–53	
5. Lady Macbeth, Scene 5, lines 40–53	
6. Macbeth, Scene 7, lines 7–12	

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ACTIVITY 8

Profile of Lady Macbeth

Act one, Scenes 5–7

Background The character of Lady Macbeth is a major force in driving the plot of the play. By the end of Act one, the audience has a very clear idea of Lady Macbeth's strong personality.

Directions Look back at the lines spoken by Lady Macbeth in Act one, Scenes 5–7 and consider what kind of person Lady Macbeth is, based on what you have read. Then rank the values listed below using 1 for most important, 2 for somewhat important, and 3 for unimportant. Next to each ranking, give a reason or a line from the play to support your ranking.

Rank	Values/Traits	Support for Rank
____	Honesty	
____	Loyalty	
____	Ambition	
____	Greed	
____	Kindness	
____	Power	
____	Love	
____	Duty	
____	Honor	
____	Courage	
____	Morality	

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ACTIVITY 9

Witches' Scene

Background *Macbeth* opens with a scene involving only the Three Witches. Their lines and activity in Act one, Scene 1, set the mood for the entire play.

Directions Add one more short scene at the end of this act for the witches, doing your best to use Shakespearean English. Through rhyme, have the witches chant a summary of what has occurred in Act one and go on to predict what Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are about to do. Copy the format in Scene 1 (1st Witch, 2nd Witch, 3rd Witch, All), and try to write a minimum of 20 lines to a maximum of 50. Use another sheet of paper, if necessary.

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ACTIVITY 10

Review

Directions Read the following quotations from *Macbeth*. In the space provided, write the letter of the character who spoke the line. Some letters will be used more than once.

a. Macbeth
b. Lady Macbeth
c. a Witch or all Witches
d. Duncan
e. Banquo

_____ 1. "Fair is foul, and foul is fair. We hover through the fog and filthy air."

_____ 2. "You should be women, and yet your beards forbid me to interpret that you are so."

_____ 3. "Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear your favours nor your hate."

_____ 4. "My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical, shakes so my single state of man that function is smothered in surmise, and nothing is but what is not."

_____ 5. "There's no art to find the man's construction in the face: He was a gentleman on whom I built an absolute trust."

_____ 6. "My plenteous joys, wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves in drops of sorrow. . . ."

_____ 7. ". . . unsex me here, and fill me from the crown to the toe top-full of direst cruelty!"

_____ 8. "This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air nimbly and sweetly recommends itself unto our gentle senses."

_____ 9. "I have no spur to prick the sides of my intent, but only vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself, and falls on th'other."

_____ 10. "But screw your courage to the sticking place, and we'll not fail."

ACTIVITY 11

Contemplating Murder

Act two, Scene 1

Background Many of Shakespeare's central characters (Hamlet, Brutus, Macbeth, and so forth) have a difficult time moving from the thought of murder to the act itself. When contemplating the murder of Caesar in *Julius Caesar,* Brutus says, "Between the acting of a dreadful thing and the first motion, all the interim is like a phantasma or a hideous dream." Macbeth is now in the middle of that hideous dream, deciding whether to kill Duncan and claim the throne.

Directions Reread Macbeth's soliloquy in lines 33–61, and answer the following questions to better understand Macbeth's struggle between ambition and loyalty. Use another sheet of paper, if necessary.

1. What does Macbeth imagine that he sees before him? What could this vision symbolize or foreshadow?

2. Why does Macbeth say that his brain is "heat-oppressed" (line 39)? What does he mean?

3. In lines 47–49, Macbeth explains why he is seeing the vision. What is his explanation?

(continued)



ACTIVITY 11

Contemplating Murder (continued)

4. In Shakespeare's day, people believed the night to be full of danger and evil, and Macbeth mentions several nighttime dangers in lines 50–56. List three of the "evils" that occur at night.

   a.

   b.

   c.

5. At the end of this soliloquy, Macbeth decides for certain to kill Duncan. In your own words, what does he say about too much talk?

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ACTIVITY 12

Writing a Letter to Mom

Act two, Scene 3

Background Malcolm and Donalbain, Duncan's sons, wisely and hastily leave Macbeth's castle after their father's murder, questioning whether or not Macbeth's show of grief is real or just a cover-up. Since they are heirs to the throne, they are naturally worried about their own safety.

Directions As Malcolm (the named heir), write a letter to your mother, Duncan's wife (the Queen of Scotland). Explain what has happened, where you and Donalbain will seek refuge, and anything else that a son would say to his mother upon finding out that his beloved father has been murdered. Mention your suspicions of Macbeth (reread lines 153–165 for help). Write your letter below. Use another sheet of paper, if necessary.

Student Name ______________________ Date __________



ACTIVITY 13

Omens

Act two, Scenes 3 and 4

Background Strange things have occurred on the night of Duncan's murder, perhaps foreshadowing the evil yet to befall Scotland.

Directions Reread the descriptions of the supernatural events in Scenes 3 and 4. Then create a scene between Ross and the old man in which Ross tells him of at least three other omens that you make up. These omens must be in keeping with the others and appropriate for the age and place (that is, only use objects and animals that could have existed in eleventh-century Scotland). The omens must foreshadow evil and chaos. Attempt to use Shakespearean language. Suggested length: No fewer than 15 lines, no more than 25. Use another sheet of paper, if necessary.

Student Name ______________________ Date __________



ACTIVITY 14

Scotland Demands an Accounting

Act two

Background Much occurs in Act two. The people of Scotland are outraged at the rumors of the death of their king and frightened by strange omens.

Directions As a reporter, write an article, in your own words, about the events occurring in Act two. The people of Scotland will be relying on you to provide them with accurate news coverage and analysis, so include the information listed below. Use another sheet of paper, if necessary.

- What Ross and Macduff said about why the king's servants would have killed him
- The person(s) whom the thanes suspect of actually killing the king
- Who is to become the next king
- The strange and supernatural events that have taken place, and what you think they are foreshadowing
- Anything else you think the Scottish people need to know to make sense of such a tragedy

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ACTIVITY 15
Review

Directions Read each statement and decide if it is true or false. Then write true (T) or false (F) in the space provided.

_____ 1. Macbeth thinks he sees a bloody goblet before him in Scene 1.

_____ 2. Macbeth believes that too much talk tends to cool one's courage.

_____ 3. Lady Macbeth drugged the servants so they would not awaken while Duncan was being murdered.

_____ 4. Lady Macbeth says that Duncan reminded her of her father as he slept.

_____ 5. Macbeth smears the servants with Duncan's blood as they sleep.

_____ 6. It is Banquo who first discovers that the king has been murdered.

_____ 7. Macbeth killed the servants so they could not claim that they had not murdered Duncan.

_____ 8. Upon hearing the news of Duncan's death, Duncan's wife faints.

_____ 9. Duncan's sons are suspected of the murder of their father.

_____ 10. Malcolm flees to England.

_____ 11. One of the unnatural occurrences was Duncan's horses eating each other.

_____ 12. Macbeth is being crowned King of Scotland at the end of this act.

Student Name ______________________________ Date __________



ACTIVITY 16

A Talk with Murderers

Act three, Scene 1

Background In Act three, Scene 1, lines 75–83, Macbeth indicates that he has spoken with the two murderers before. In the earlier conversation, Macbeth blamed Banquo for mistreating the two men, saying that they had been mistaken in thinking Macbeth had wronged them.

Directions Based on what you learned from reading the exchange between Macbeth and the murderers, write a transcript of the earlier conversation between Macbeth and the murderers and detail what Macbeth claims Banquo did to wrong the two men. Whatever the invented wrongs are, they must be bad enough to warrant the kind of anger that would make these two men want to kill Banquo. Suggested length: ¾ of a page to one page. Use another sheet of paper, if necessary.

Student Name ______________________ Date __________

ACTIVITY 17

Hecate's Prophecy

Act three, Scene 5

Background In Act three, Scene 5, the Three Witches' queen, Hecate, scolds them for revealing the future to Macbeth.

Directions Answer the following questions about what Hecate says to the witches in order to better understand what will happen next in the play. Then make some predictions of your own about Macbeth's future.

1. Why is Hecate angry that the Three Witches have revealed information to Macbeth?

2. What is ironic about Hecate, the queen of evil, calling Macbeth "spiteful and wrathful"?

3. Which line(s) of Hecate's speech tells us whether Macbeth's future is good or bad?

4. Hecate is going to employ her powers as well as the witches' to interfere with Macbeth's fate. Why? (See lines 11–13.)

(continued)

ACTIVITY 17

Hecate's Prophecy (continued)

5. According to Hecate, what is man's "chiefest enemy"?

6. What do you think will happen to Macbeth? Will the witches' prophecies about Banquo's sons becoming heirs to the throne come true, or will Macbeth see to it that he remains king?

7. What do you think will happen to Lady Macbeth?

8. If Macbeth had never heard the witches' prophecies, do you think he still would have killed Duncan and Banquo? Why or why not?

Student Name ______________________________ Date ____________

ACTIVITY 18

Strangely Borne Events

Act three, Scene 6

Background In Act three, Scene 6, Lennox sarcastically relays the recent bloody events from Macbeth's perspective—a perspective that is increasingly hard to believe.

Directions Using Lennox's speech in Scene 6 as a guide, retell, in your own words, the following events from the play. First, imagine that you are Macbeth explaining how and why the event occurred, keeping in mind that he will be lying to protect himself. Then imagine that you are a skeptical member of the populace, and retell the same event from this point of view, using sarcasm for emphasis. Use another sheet of paper, if necessary.

- **Duncan's Death**

  1. Macbeth's retelling:

     Others' retelling:

- **Banquo's Death**

  2. Macbeth's retelling:

     Others' retelling:

- **The Death of the Two Servants**

  3. Macbeth's retelling:

     Others' retelling:

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ACTIVITY 19

Put It to Music

Background *Macbeth*, with its scenes of witches hovering over steaming cauldrons, of drafty castles, and of bloodthirsty deeds, is considered one of Shakespeare's most atmospheric plays.

Directions Choose five events from any five different scenes in Acts one to three of the play and put them to music that fits the tone of the event. You will need to use another sheet of paper to complete this activity.

After choosing a scene and a song, explain the following in a paragraph:

- Which scene you have chosen and what is going on in it
- Which song you have chosen
- Why the song fits (tone, lyrics, theme, or a combination)

Example

In Act three, Scene 4, Macbeth sees a ghost and is unable to carry on with the guests joining him for dinner (the guests, of course, cannot see the ghost). For this scene, I chose the Eagles' "Hotel California" because its eerie tone fits the hallucinatory and murderous nature of what is going on with Macbeth: He sees death and instruments of death wherever he turns now because of the murder he has committed. Also, some lyrics in the song seem appropriate: "And in the master's chambers/they gathered for the feast/they stab it with their steely knives, but they just can't kill the beast. . . ." These lines are fitting because Macbeth is now king but he can't enjoy it because of the murder of Duncan. Now, no matter how many times he would like to stab at the ghost and be rid of it, he never will be. His betrayal of Duncan and his horrible deed will end up being his ruin. He can't escape "the beast" (his evil nature).

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ACTIVITY 20
Review

Directions Test your understanding of the characters thus far by matching each character with the correct description of him or her. All letters will be used at least once, and some letters will be used more than once. Write the letter of the correct answer in the space provided.

a. Macbeth	c. Duncan	e. Malcolm	g. Donalbain
b. Lady Macbeth	d. Banquo	f. Three Witches	h. Macduff

_____ 1. hears the Three Witches' predictions along with Macbeth

_____ 2. smears the servants with Duncan's blood

_____ 3. son of Duncan who is the named successor to the throne

_____ 4. tells Macbeth he is to be named thane of Cawdor

_____ 5. son of Duncan who flees to Ireland after his father's murder

_____ 6. has Banquo killed

_____ 7. King of Scotland at the beginning of the play

_____ 8. sees an imaginary dagger

_____ 9. first one to discover that the king has been murdered

_____ 10. kills two servants

_____ 11. answer to Hecate

_____ 12. is received warmly by the King of England

Student Name ______________________________ Date ____________



ACTIVITY 21

Something Wicked This Way Comes Act four, Scene 1

Background Macbeth goes to the Three Witches to demand knowledge of his impending fate. In turn, Macbeth sees four ghostly apparitions who prophesy his future.

Directions Describe what each apparition foretells and what each apparition symbolizes in Macbeth's past, present, or future.

Apparition 1: An Armed Head

What the apparition foretells:

What it symbolizes:

Apparition 2: A Bloody Child

What the apparition foretells:

What it symbolizes:

Apparition 3: A Child Crowned, with a Tree in His Hand

What the apparition foretells:

What it symbolizes:

Apparition 4: Eight Kings and Banquo's Ghost

What the apparitions foretell:

What they symbolize:

Student Name ______________________ Date __________



ACTIVITY 22

A Letter from Lady Macduff

Act four, Scene 2

Background In this scene, Lady Macduff expresses her disgust and anger at her husband for leaving her and their children to go to England. She even goes so far as to call her husband a traitor.

Directions Compose a letter from Lady Macduff to her husband in which you (as Lady Macduff) express your anger, frustration, and shock over the departure. Refer to lines 1–75 in Scene 2 for the content of your letter, using the exchange between Lady Macduff and her son, if possible. Suggested length: ½ to ¾ of a page

Student Name ______________________ Date __________

ACTIVITY 23

Malcolm Tests Macduff

Act four, Scene 3

Background In this scene, Malcolm tests Macduff's loyalty to him and to Scotland by lying about himself and observing Macduff's reaction.

Directions Write Malcolm and Macduff's exchange in your own words using the following lines as guides. Use another sheet of paper, if necessary.

1. Malcolm compares himself to Macbeth (lines 50–55).

   How is Malcolm rating himself as a leader compared to Macbeth?

2. Macduff replies (lines 55–57).

   What is Macduff's answer to Malcolm's self-criticism?

3. Malcolm then becomes more specific about his personal weaknesses (lines 60–66).

   What personal weakness does Malcolm describe here?

4. Macduff tries to ease Malcolm's worries (lines 70–76).

   What does Macduff have to say about Malcolm's self-proclaimed vice?

(continued)

Student Name ______________________________ Date ____________

ACTIVITY 23

Malcolm Tests Macduff (continued)

5. Malcolm goes on to describe his worst flaw (lines 76–82).

   According to Malcolm, what is his worst flaw or vice?

6. Even at this, Macduff attempts to play down Malcolm's weakness (lines 87–90).

   What is Macduff saying here?

7. Malcolm replies to Macduff's argument (lines 91–100).

   What is Malcolm trying to convince Macduff of here?

8. Upon hearing all of this, Macduff reacts strongly (lines 111–114).

   What is Macduff saying?

Reread Malcolm's speech in lines 114–137, and answer the following questions.

9. Why does Malcolm lie to Macduff?

10. Has Macduff passed Malcolm's test? How can you tell?

Student Name ________________________________ Date __________



ACTIVITY 24

Headlines for Seven Scenes

Background By the end of Act four, all of the action instrumental to the plot of *Macbeth* has occurred, setting up the audience for the resolutions that take place in Act five.

Directions Choose seven scenes from various acts throughout the play that you have already read. Keep these in chronological order. Decide which event is central to each of your chosen scenes, and then write a headline for each event. Remember that headlines often employ alliteration (**B**rawny **B**adgers **B**ludgeon Eagles in Semifinals), use vivid action verbs, and are straightforward and attention-getting. Generally, articles (a, an, the) are left out of headlines.

1. Act _____, Scene _____, Headline:

2. Act _____, Scene _____, Headline:

3. Act _____, Scene _____, Headline:

4. Act _____, Scene _____, Headline:

5. Act _____, Scene _____, Headline:

6. Act _____, Scene _____, Headline:

7. Act _____, Scene _____, Headline:

Student Name ______________________________ Date ____________



ACTIVITY 25
Review

Directions In the space provided, number the following events from the first four acts of *Macbeth* to match the order in which they occurred.

Act one

___ Macbeth contemplates the murder of Duncan.

___ Duncan publicly proclaims that Malcolm is the chosen heir to the throne.

___ Macbeth is told by the Three Witches that he will be king.

___ A sergeant tells Duncan of Macbeth's bravery in war.

Act two

___ Malcolm and Donalbain flee to separate countries.

___ Macbeth sees an imaginary dagger.

___ Ross and the Old Man discuss the strange occurrences.

___ Macbeth murders Duncan.

Act three

___ Macbeth sees a ghost.

___ Macbeth speaks to the two murderers before they murder Banquo.

___ Hecate scolds the Three Witches.

___ Lennox sarcastically speaks of Macbeth and the death occurring around him.

Act four

___ Lady Macduff scolds her husband in his absence.

___ Macduff is told that his wife and children are dead.

___ Malcolm tests Macduff's loyalty by lying to him about the kind of ruler he (Malcolm) will be.

___ Macbeth goes to the witches to discover his fate.

Student Name ______________________ Date ________



ACTIVITY 26

Lady Macbeth's Madness

Act five, Scene 1

Background Though she formerly chided her husband for his hallucinations, Lady Macbeth now sleepwalks and acts insane. Her doctor hears her ranting and raving, and he listens to her gentlewoman's accounts of her lunacy. Later, in Scene 3, the doctor says that there is nothing he can do for a sick mind, and he secretly wishes to be far away from Dunsinane, since he knows the English are coming.

Directions Imagine that you are the doctor who hears all that Lady Macbeth reveals as she sleepwalks (the blood she cannot get off her hands, and so forth). You know that the English are coming, and you don't want to be considered loyal to the murderous Macbeths. To show that you are not aligned with Macbeth or his wife, you detail your experience in trying to treat her, being sure to include any murderous details that the English would consider further proof of the necessity for Macbeth's overthrow. Suggested length: ¾ of a page to one page. Use another sheet of paper, if necessary.

Student Name ______________________________ Date ____________

ACTIVITY 27

Ambition's Work

Act five

Background Throughout the play, many people express an opinion about Macbeth's character. In the beginning, he is spoken of as a valiant soldier. By Act five, everyone is cursing his name.

Directions First, in your own words, paraphrase the following lines spoken about Macbeth. Second, answer some questions on how opinions about Macbeth have changed and what brought about this change.

1. **Act one, Scene 2, lines 16–23**
   "For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—disdaining fortune, with his brandished steel, which smoked with bloody execution, like Valour's minion carved out his passage till he faced the slave; which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him, till he unseamed him from the nave to the chops, and fixed his head upon our battlements."

   What is being said here about Macbeth?

2. **Act one, Scene 4, lines 54–58**
   "True, worthy Banquo; he is full so valiant, and in his commendations I am fed: it is a banquet to me. Let's after him, whose care is gone before to bid us welcome: it is a peerless kinsman."

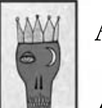
   What is being said here about Macbeth?

3. **Act three, Scene 5, lines 10–14**
   "And, which is worse, all you have done hath been but for a wayward son, spiteful and wrathful, who (as others do) loves for his own ends, not for you."

   What is being said here about Macbeth?

(continued)

Student Name ______________________ Date __________



ACTIVITY 27

Ambition's Work (continued)

4. **Act four, Scene 3, lines 56–60**
   "Not in the legions of horrid hell can come a devil more damned in evils to top Macbeth. I grant him bloody, luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful, sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin that has a name."

   What is being said here about Macbeth?

Questions

5. How have opinions about Macbeth changed over the course of the play, and *why* have they changed?

6. Considering how well Macbeth is thought of at the beginning of the play, do you think the witches' prophesy is responsible for changing his character?

7. How has Macbeth's ambition affected him? How has ambition affected Lady Macbeth?

Student Name ______________________________ Date ____________



ACTIVITY 28

The Prophecies Come True

Background The theme of prophesy is central to *Macbeth*, with prophesies being spoken and then occurring throughout the entire play.

Directions Note the following prophecies, and explain the circumstances that occurred in order for the prophecies to come true.

Prophecy 1: Macbeth will become thane of Cawdor (see Act one).
Explanation of how it came true:

Prophecy 2: Macbeth will become King of Scotland (see Act two).
Explanation of how it came true:

Prophecy 3: None of woman born shall harm Macbeth (so someone "not born of woman" *shall* be the end of Macbeth; see Act five).
Explanation of how it came true:

Prophecy 4: Macbeth shall never vanquished be until Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane hill shall come against him (see Act five).
Explanation of how it came true:

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ACTIVITY 29

Macbeth's Obituary

Act five, Scene 7

Background In the final scene of *Macbeth*, Macduff gives Macbeth the chance to surrender before engaging him in one-to-one combat. Macbeth refuses, showing both his courage and his bloodthirsty nature. Macduff kills Macbeth offstage, and returns with Macbeth's head on a pike.

Directions Even a tyrant deserves an obituary. Write Macbeth's death notice for the local Scotland paper, covering his bravery in battle, his rise to power, his fall to evil ambition, his wife's suicide, and all the murders he committed or had committed for him along the way. Suggested length: 1–1½ pages. You will need to use another sheet of paper to complete this activity.

Student Name ______________________________ Date ____________



ACTIVITY 30

Review

Directions Read the following quotations from *Macbeth*. In the space provided, write the letter of the character who spoke the line.

___ 1. "I bear a charmed life, which must not yield to one of a woman born."

a. Macbeth c. Banquo
b. Hecate d. Macduff

___ 2. "Out, damned spot! Out, I say!"

a. Lady Macduff c. Three Witches
b. Macbeth d. Lady Macbeth

___ 3. "By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes. . . ."

a. Hecate c. Lady Macbeth
b. Macbeth d. Three Witches

___ 4. "Double, double toil and trouble; fire burn and cauldron bubble."

a. Hecate c. Three Witches
b. Lady Macbeth d. Banquo's ghost

___ 5. "Out, out, brief candle!"

a. Hecate c. Lady Macbeth
b. Macduff d. Macbeth

___ 6. ". . . unsex me here, and fill me from the crown to the toe top-full of direst cruelty!"

a. Macbeth c. Three Witches
b. Lady Macbeth d. Lady Macduff

___ 7. "So well thy words become thee, as thy wounds; they smack of honour both."

a. Banquo c. Macbeth
b. Duncan d. Macduff

___ 8. "O, horror! horror! horror! Tongue, nor heart, cannot conceive nor name thee!"

a. Fleance c. Macduff
b. Banquo d. Lady Macbeth

___ 9. "It is concluded: Banquo, thy soul's flight, if it find heaven, must find it out tonight."

a. Banquo c. Donalbain
b. Macbeth d. Duncan

___ 10. "Then yield thee, coward, and live to be the show and gaze o'th'time."

a. Macduff c. Macbeth
b. Malcolm d. Donalbain

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Macbeth

Final Test

Directions: Read each statement. Then write true (T) or false (F) in the space provided.

___ 1. The last person to die in the play is Malcolm.

___ 2. Lady Macbeth goes insane.

___ 3. Macbeth forces the two murderers to murder Banquo.

___ 4. This play takes place in Italy.

___ 5. The Three Witches are also referred to as the Weird Sisters.

___ 6. Lady Macbeth sees a ghost.

___ 7. Macduff is one of Duncan's sons.

___ 8. In this play, the King of England has the power to heal people.

___ 9. Fleance, Banquo's son, escapes the murderers.

___ 10. Lady Macbeth is murdered by Malcolm.

Directions: Choose the letter of the best answer. Write it in the space provided.

___ 11. What is Macbeth's original title (the one he held prior to the war)?

a. thane of Glamis
b. thane of Cawdor
c. Prince
d. King

___ 12. At what location does Duncan remark upon the sweet air?

a. Macbeth's castle
b. Banquo's castle
c. the battlefield
d. a hillside in Scotland

___ 13. Macbeth says, "Is this a ________ I see before me?"

a. spot
b. murder
c. dagger
d. ghost

___ 14. Name one strange event that Ross and the Old Man discuss.

a. terrible hurricanes
b. corpses walking around
c. owls hooting during the day
d. horses eating each other

(continued)

___ 15. Who kills Macbeth?

a. Malcolm
b. Duncan
c. Macduff
d. Donalbain

___ 16. Who is to be named king at the end of the play?

a. Malcolm
b. Duncan
c. Fleance
d. Donalbain

___ 17. What is the name of Macbeth's castle?

a. Dunkirk
b. Dreadinshire
c. Dunsinore
d. Dunsinane

___ 18. Who is the last person in the play to speak?

a. Malcolm
b. Banquo
c. Macduff
d. Fleance

___ 19. What is the first apparition that Macbeth views when he goes to demand answers from the Three Witches in Act four?

a. a dagger
b. an armed head
c. a bloody child
d. the ghost of Banquo

___ 20. What does Macbeth do to cover up his murder of Duncan?

a. He kills the servants.
b. He cleans off his fingerprints.
c. He claims that Banquo did it.
d. He pretends that he is insane.

Student Name ______________________________ Date ____________



CULMINATING ACTIVITY 1

Best Bad Guy

Directions In the same vein as many of today's reality television shows, particularly *American Idol*, have Macbeth, Lady Macbeth and the Three Witches compete for the title of "Best Bad Guy." Team up with some classmates to cast your reality show, and then present your show to the class. You will need the following:

- Four students to play celebrity judges. Choose celebrities who you think would have a particular insight that makes them qualified to judge. Perhaps they have played many villains in movies or on television or have been involved in questionable activities.

- Five students to play Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, and the Three Witches. They will vie for the title by presenting the judges with brief, impassioned pleas that reflect events and lines from the play. Each should try to prove that he or she is the best bad guy of the play.

- Some sort of prize deemed suitable for whoever wins the Best Bad Guy Award. Make the prize suitable for the person who wins it.

- The rest of the class, who will be the "voters at home" who accept or deny the judges' decision based on the tally of their own vote

- Anything else you can think of to make this more like reality television—Elizabethan style!

Student Name ______________________________ Date ____________



CULMINATING ACTIVITY 2

Was Macbeth a Hero or a Villain?

Directions Write a multi-paragraph essay that explores the readers' perception of Macbeth: Was he a tragic hero led astray by the witches' predictions or simply a greedy, ambitious killer? Use events and quotations from the text for support. Suggested length: 3–5 pages. In the space below, write an outline of your essay.

Student Name ______________________________ Date ____________



CULMINATING ACTIVITY 3

Create a Movie Poster or a Book Jacket

Directions Imagine that you are a graphic designer working on designing either a movie poster (or DVD cover) or a book jacket to promote *Macbeth*. Incorporate into your design one of the major events from the play and as many of the characters as possible. Make the design enticing and colorful, so that anyone seeing it would feel compelled to read the book or see the movie. Make the lettering in large print and easy to read, and make the design big. You may use poster board or a sheet of paper for your design.

Student Name ______________________________ Date __________



CULMINATING ACTIVITY 4

Macbeth *in Today's World*

Directions Choose a line or quotation (must be a complete thought) from the play and attach it to a modern-day event to demonstrate that, despite being written long ago, Shakespeare's words still carry relevance today. Print the quotation or line in large, easy-to-read letters on poster board along with the modern-day event (occurring within the last 10 years), which should be drawn or shown in a collage. For example, you could use Macduff's quotation from Act four, Scene 3, lines 103–105: "O nation miserable! With an untitled tyrant bloody-sceptered, when shalt thou see thy wholesome days again . . ." The accompanying collage could show a picture of Saddam Hussein with images of his reign and the 2003 war.

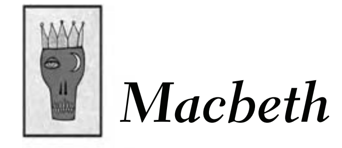
Student Name ______________________ Date __________



CULMINATING ACTIVITY 5

Macbeth, *the Parody*?

Directions Take each of the five acts and condense the events and lines into a 3–5 minute version. Write everything in modern-day language, and then stage the 15–20 minute play. The result should be a humorous and concise rendition of the famous play. Write your version below, using additional sheets of paper as needed.



Macbeth

Activity 1

Answers will vary, but the basic explanation is that Scottish rebels (led by Macdonwald) are fighting the king of Scotland's (Duncan's) troops. The Irish and Norwegians are helping the rebels. Macbeth killed Macdonwald, but the king of Norway and another Scottish traitor, the thane of Cawdor, launched a fresh attack against Macbeth and Banquo. They valiantly fought back and won through sheer determination and courage. Macbeth's bravery in hand-to-hand combat is extolled.

Activity 2

Answers will vary.

Activity 3

Answers may vary slightly.

1. Thane of Glamis and thane of Cawdor
2. He is tenacious and courageous, never giving up and fighting to the end. He is not afraid to kill boldly, as shown by his ripping apart one traitor from neck to stomach and then impaling his head upon a stick (Macbeth does this to Macdonwald).
3. Macbeth is intrigued by the titles with which they address him, and he wants to know more. He does not seem to be afraid of them.
4. Macbeth feels strange about what the witches have told him; he says their prophecies could be evil. However, he claims that the next prophecy of him being king is the "imperial theme"—he does seem interested in it but nervous that he's interested. His speech seems ominous, as though no good can come from what the witches have told him.
5. Answers will vary.

Activity 4

Answers will vary, but the following may serve as a content guide.

Macbeth writes to his wife to tell her that, of the witches' prophecies, two have already come true (thane of Cawdor and Glamis). He tells her so she will know of the "greatness in store" for them. Lady Macbeth is sure that her husband will be king, but she is worried that his overly sensitive and tender nature doesn't have what it takes to make the throne his; she wants him to return quickly so that she can inspire him with her words and passion.

Activity 5

1. a
2. d
3. c
4. c
5. d
6. a
7. b
8. a
9. b
10. b

Activity 6

Pro: If there were no consequences and eternity didn't exist, it would be good to kill him quickly (lines 1–5).

Cons: Generally, we sow what we reap, and I'd end up paying for this murder here on Earth (lines 7–10). Duncan trusts me; I'm his kinsman and his host (lines 12–15). Duncan has

been such a good, wise, and gentle king, that if I kill him, I will look like a vicious and ambitious murderer (lines 16–25). Finally, ambition is often times men's downfall, and that is the reason I'd be doing this (line 27–28).

Activity 7

1. Banquo says that the witches give Macbeth these prophecies to win him over to their side, only to betray him cruelly later. It serves as a warning for consulting with the evil witches.
2. Macbeth is horrified at the thought of murder but intrigued by the thought of becoming king; the lines foreshadow Duncan's murder by Macbeth.
3. Duncan says that you can never tell from a man's face what is really going on in his brain—you cannot really ever trust someone. This is a foreshadowing of Macbeth's betrayal.
4. Macbeth calls for night to hide his murderous deeds—daylight is too pure for the evil he must commit; it is foreshadowing the murders to come.
5. Here, Lady Macbeth basically calls on the devil to make her evil and without remorse so that she can assist her husband in the murders that must be committed for Macbeth to become king. She is basically selling her soul for the crown, and it is a foreshadowing of the evil to come for everyone.
6. Macbeth, in contemplating the murder of Duncan, says that humans often become the victims of their own lessons—they pay for their crimes. It is foreshadowing the destruction that will come to Macbeth as a result of his boundless ambition.

Activity 8

Answers will vary, but most of the "good traits" (honesty, loyalty, kindness) will probably be low ranking—ambition, duty (to her husband), and courage (though it is derived from evil intent) will most likely be high ranking.

Activity 9

Scenes will vary.

Activity 10

1. c
2. e
3. e
4. b
5. d
6. d
7. b
8. d
9. a
10. b

Activity 11

Answers may vary slightly.

1. A dagger—this could symbolize the murders that are to occur; it could also symbolize madness/insanity.
2. He is so preoccupied with ambition and the bloody work that must be done for him to become king that he can barely think clearly. The thought of murder and the evil that is inherent with this deed is oppressive to him.
3. He thinks he is seeing the dagger because he is so obsessed with the thought of murder.
4. a. wicked nightmares
   b. witches performing their black magic
   c. howling wolves (also bloodthirsty murderers)

5. He says that too much talk cools one's courage—he needs to kill Duncan now before he thinks too much about it and changes his mind.

Activity 12

Letters will vary.

Activity 13

Scenes will vary.

Activity 14

Articles will vary.

Activity 15

1. F
2. T
3. T
4. T
5. F
6. F
7. T
8. F
9. T
10. T
11. T
12. T

Activity 16

Conversations will vary.

Activity 17

Answers may vary; the following is a guide for 1–5:

1. Since she is their leader, she wanted to have some hand in toying with the life of Macbeth. She wants some of the "glory" of being a prophetess.
2. If the queen of evil, the head of the witches, is calling Macbeth those things, he must be a truly evil man.
3. lines 21 and 30
4. Macbeth is a bad man and deserves what is coming to him; also, he cares nothing for what the witches have done for him—he is just ambitious and greedy and wants all the power and glory for himself.
5. "Security," or overconfidence/ complacency

Activity 18

Answers will vary slightly.

1. Macbeth would say that the servants murdered Duncan because they were paid to do so by his sons, who wanted the throne for themselves. Others would say that Macbeth killed Duncan so that he (Macbeth) could become king.
2. Macbeth would say that Banquo shouldn't have been walking alone at night and that murderers killed him—probably for money. Others would say that everyone close to Macbeth with any stake in the future of Scotland seems to be dying, and it is suspicious.
3. Macbeth would say that he killed the servants out of passion and grief for the slain Duncan. He just couldn't restrain himself. Others would say that Macbeth killed the servants to cover up the fact that he killed Duncan.

Activity 19

Music selections and paragraphs will vary.

Activity 20

1. d	7. c
2. b	8. a
3. e	9. h
4. f	10. a
5. g	11. f
6. a	12. e

Activity 21

Answers may vary slightly.

Apparition 1: It tells Macbeth to beware Macduff. It may symbolize the bloody battle that will ensue over the throne of Scotland.

Apparition 2: It tells Macbeth to be bold and that nobody born of a woman shall harm him. It may symbolize Macbeth's impending death and how his overconfidence becomes his downfall. It also may symbolize the senseless slaughter of the children Macbeth wants killed (so they are not heirs to the throne) and Macbeth's bloody ambition.

Apparition 3: This apparition also tells Macbeth to be brave, and that he has nothing to fear until a forest (Birnam Wood) comes to Macbeth at Dunsinane. This symbolizes the way in which Macbeth will be defeated and his overconfidence (because he scoffs at this prophecy).

Apparition 4: This apparition tells Macbeth that two kingdoms will be combined so that the witches' initial prophecy of Banquo fathering many kings can come true. Banquo's ghost symbolizes Macbeth paying for his deeds as well as symbolizing Macbeth's destruction.

Activity 22

Letters will vary.

Activity 23

1. Malcolm says that he is so full of vices and evil that Macbeth would look as pure as snow in comparison; according to him, Macbeth would be a better leader.
2. Macduff says that no one could be worse than Macbeth.
3. Malcolm goes on to say that he has terrible lust, and nothing can satisfy him (he's a nymphomaniac).
4. Macduff says that there could be worse vices than that one, and there should be plenty of women who would be willing to satisfy him (Malcolm) when he is king.
5. Malcolm goes on to say that he is greedy and ambitious and covets nearly everything he sees.
6. Macduff says that there is plenty of land to go around, and that this vice is not such a big deal when considered with all of Malcolm's good traits.
7. Malcolm basically says that there is no good in him; he will be a black-hearted, ambitious, and evil ruler who will stop at nothing to get what he wants.
8. Macduff laments for Scotland and for himself—the situation is hopeless if it is as Malcolm claims.
9. Malcolm lies to Macduff about everything to test Macduff's loyalty to him.
10. Yes, Macduff has passed Malcolm's test because Malcolm says, "Macduff, this noble passion . . . [hath] reconciled my

thoughts to thy good truth and honour." Malcolm is convinced that Macduff truly has Scotland's best interests at heart.

Activity 24

Headlines will vary.

Activity 25

Order of events:

Act one: 4, 3, 2, 1

Act two: 3, 1, 4, 2

Act three: 2, 1, 3, 4

Act four: 2, 4, 3, 1

Activity 26

Answers will vary.

Activity 27

Answers may vary, but use the following as a guide:

1. Macbeth is very brave and an excellent fighter; he is also not afraid to kill in a most bloody way.
2. Macbeth is a good host and he is a friend without match.
3. Macbeth is spiteful and looks out only for his best interests.
4. There is no one who can match Macbeth's evil. He is the very representation of evil, as he is bloody and false.
5. In the beginning, everyone thought well of Macbeth; now they think him to be the worst kind of villain. They think this because they know he murdered Duncan and Banquo, two people to whom he was supposedly loyal.
6. Answers will vary since this is an opinion question.
7. Their ambition has made them both somewhat insane—Macbeth sees ghosts and daggers, and Lady Macbeth is so obsessed with the murders that have occurred that she has gone mad. Their ambition has been their downfall.

Activity 28

Answers will vary, but use the following as a guide:

Prophesy 1: The thane of Cawdor was a traitor and Scottish rebel, and he was captured and put to death. Therefore, Macbeth received his title and lands.

Prophesy 2: Macbeth killed Duncan and was crowned king.

Prophesy 3: Macduff was taken from his mother's womb before a natural birth could occur, and he is the one who ends up killing Macbeth.

Prophesy 4: Macduff and Malcolm's troops use tree limbs from Great Birnam Wood to hide themselves; therefore, when they advance upon Macbeth's castle (Dunsinane), it is Great Birnam Wood "coming" to Dunsinane.

Activity 29

Obituaries will vary.

Activity 30

1. a
2. d
3. d
4. c
5. d
6. b
7. b
8. c
9. b
10. a

Final Test

1. F	11. a
2. T	12. a
3. F	13. c
4. F	14. d
5. T	15. c
6. F	16. a
7. F	17. d
8. T	18. a
9. T	19. b
10. F	20. a

Culminating Activity 1

Presentations will vary.

Culminating Activity 2

Essays will vary, but the following may serve as grading guidelines:

- Strong thesis that remained focus for entire paper
- Textual support
- Within length guidelines
- Properly attributed quotations from play
- Demonstrated understanding of text
- Well-supported thesis
- Proper spelling and punctuation

Culminating Activity 3

Posters will vary. Here are some possible grading guidelines:

- Colorful
- Easy-to-read
- Incorporated title
- Represented the play and events appropriately

Culminating Activity 4

Responses will vary, but the following may serve as a grading guideline:

- Quotation is big, colorful, and easy-to-read.
- Event is well-represented through drawing or collage.
- Explanation of event and how it ties in with quotation is well done.
- Line or quotation is not misinterpreted.
- Quotation and event demonstrates insight into play.

Culminating Activity 5

Plays will vary, but the following may serve as a grading guideline:

- Students not overly tied to scripts (practiced enough)
- Demonstrated understanding of play; didn’t misinterpret lines or events
- Participation by everyone in group
- Kept performance within time guideline
- Energetic and enthusiastic performance; spoke loudly enough for everyone to hear

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